

had gone straight down-stairs and away,—she was a day-pupil,—her red head carried even higher than its wont and an aggressive mouth pursed even more aggressively than usual. There was color, too, in her ordinarily pale face. She had expected the Upper Tens to be delighted, and they were not!

They had said that her application would be considered along with the others!

'It would do her good to hear. It would save some one the trouble of telling her,' said Sylvia almost savagely.

'Why can't we simply blackball her and be done with it?' said fastidious Sarah Endicott.

'Because when we planned a club simply for good times we agreed that it shouldn't give any one a bad time, and that it should help people if we could make it,' said the president.

'A lot it will help people if we let Blandid Foyle get into it!' exclaimed Sylvia sharply. 'She only wants an audience to hear about mamma's tapestries and mamma's point-lace, and how mamma's wonderful taste decorated rooms in barracks-y places. I believe her father "was" an army officer, though you can't tell—'

'O Sylvia!' murmured a reproachful chorus. 'You know we all thought the Foyles were adventurers, at first,' said Sylvia stoutly. 'She talked so much as if she were pretending something! She kept saying that she was about to come out when they left Baltimore, when she was a perfect little savage, and her aunt had told Dr. Pettingill, when Blandid had that nervous fever, that what ailed the girl was isolation, her mother was so queer they had never known a soul!'

'It doesn't seem as if she could ever have gone to school or had a governess, either,' said the president reflectively.

'She's at least a century behind the times.'

'A century—she's mediaeval!' said Sylvia. 'If she has read a book, it's some commonplace, old-fashioned thing; and she begins at the beginning and tells it to you, almost word for word, and you can't get a word in edgewise—'

'Hard for you, Syl!' laughed Minna Gage.

'I know I like to talk,' said Sylvia with a deepened flush, 'but I hope I know enough to talk about mutually interesting things, and not to think that Sylvia Crombie and her small doings can fill anybody's universe!'

'You've had a better chance, Sylvia,' said Alice Towne quietly. 'I've heard that an idea of self-importance grows immensely in isolation.'

'Yes, and she has an intense desire for the social position that she has never had,' said the president meditatively. 'I read in a clever book the other day that social position was like the nose on your face; if it's there, you never think of it; but if it isn't!'

'And her talk of her work in the Mission School fits in so queerly with this continual suggestion of social smartness!' Sylvia broke in again. 'There's a kind of mystic, mediaeval pietism about her that you can't call religion.'

'O Sylvia, don't let's judge about those things,' said Rhoda Norcross earnestly. Rhoda was not a girl who was ever thought to be religious herself, either.

'Well, there was the time she just posed for us to see the children hang around her and hug her at the Mission School. She talks all the time of how much they think of her. And—I'll own I can't see anything good about that girl—you know it was she who got Miss Wentworth discharged because she presumed to correct her essay in a way she didn't like. Miss Wentworth did make blunders, and it was trying; but the rest of us bore it because Miss Wentworth had her old father and mother to support, and was all worn out. There's no sentiment about Miss Blandid Foyle except sentiment for herself.'

'Sylvia, dear, you are bitter,' said the president softly.

'But isn't it true?' demanded Sylvia. And every head in the room was nodded, more or less emphatically. 'And she doesn't come up here to the school except in recitation-hours. If you were a day-pupil, too, like me, and lived on the next street, and had her coming to see you continually, to talk and talk! You know our living-room is large; and in one corner my sister Ethelinda goes to sleep, and wakes again, with Blandid's talk still going on and on, and Aunt Rebecca slips out, and tells me afterwards that she feels as if she had been under the town pump. And with all the pettiness and vanity and false pretension that

forces you to despise her she has taken lately to being instructive; has a little air of preaching. And I wouldn't bear it, only I've been so afraid I should fairly blaze out at her. You know if you have a temper it makes you meek, in a way—'

'We never thought you were suffering from that quality, Syl!' came in a giggle from the girls.

But Syl had defenders.

'I know just what you mean!' said Ruth Lovejoy. 'One does bear for fear of letting one's self go too far! And I don't think the Upper Tens ought to let themselves be handicapped at the start by a girl who at the best is an insufferable bore. Let's blackball her and be done with it, as Sarah says.'

'I say give her a chance!' said Rhoda Norcross quickly.

Rhoda never despaired of any one. She said it was because she 'realized herself.'

'We'll put it to vote,' said the president.

The vote showed a majority of three in favor of giving Blandid Foyle a chance.

'Then,' said the president, 'some one must

ed deeply troubled; there are always such varieties of human nature to be found where there are fourteen girls.

It was always understood that the drawing of lots was a finality. The girl chosen by destiny must not even complain. But there was blank dismay upon Sylvia's face, and tears rushed to her eyes.

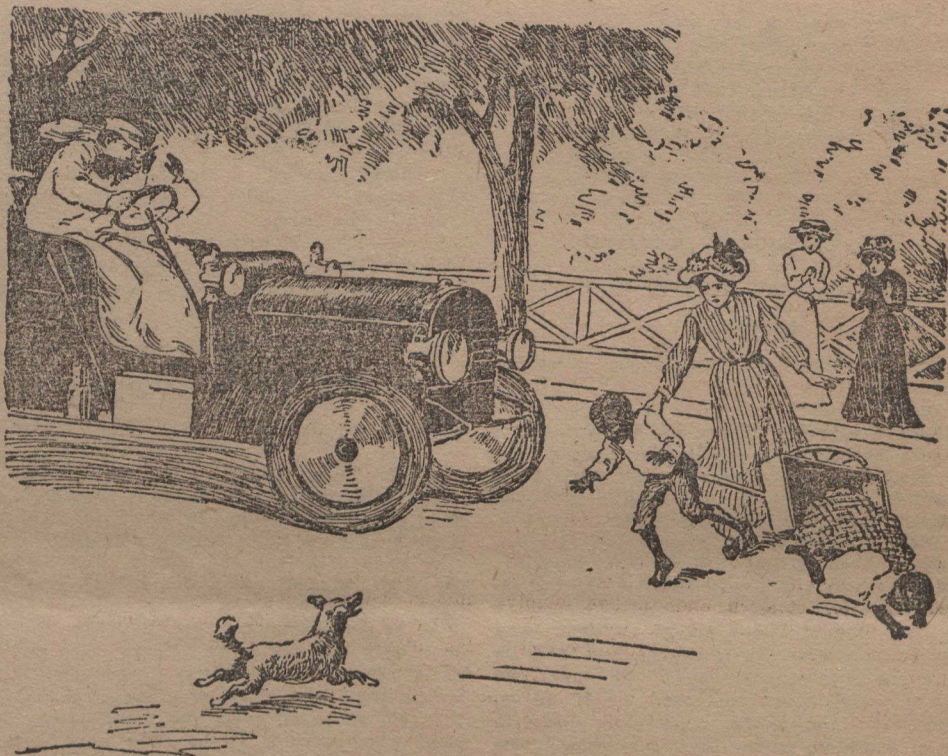
'I can't make her understand; she sees things so differently from other people,' she faltered.

'And she has exasperated me so that I can't be sympathetic. You can't be sympathetic when you feel superior, and I can't help feeling superior to Blandid Foyle.'

'And the lot did fall on Jon-i-ah; O Lord, send me li-ght!'

Minna Gage sang with only half-mocking fervor.

'I know you won't hurt her any more than you can help,' said the president more cheerfully than she felt. She wished that the lot had fallen to almost any girl rather than to



BLANDID DASHED INTO THE STREET.

delicately but firmly make her understand that a club is not an institution for the glorification of one, but for the sharing of ideas and experiences and good times. Any one can see that nothing could be better than a good club for Blandid Foyle. Who will do it? You, Alice?

But gentle, tactful, wisely human Alice Towne shook her head decidedly.

'There's only one way—to draw lots,' said Perley French. 'That leaves the matter to Providence in a way, and you do feel the need of a special providence if you're going to try to help Blandid Foyle!'

There was a dead, apprehensive silence as the secretary prepared a little bunch of slips of paper, one for each member of the club. On one paper Alice Clay, the artist of the club, had hastily sketched a head; any one would have recognized Blandid Foyle's head, tousled pompadour, aggressive mouth, and 'tip-tilted' nose.

The girl who drew the sketch from the papers in the secretary's hand must perform the unpleasant duty of telling Miss Blandid Foyle 'delicately' that her ego must be subdued before she could become one of the Upper Tens.

There was a hush in the room as breathless as if the fate of nations depended upon the drawing. Every one except those girls themselves was hoping that the lot would fall to Alice Towne or Rhoda Norcross or to the president, whose social tact was unquestionable.

Sylvia was the fourth to draw, and after she had drawn the proceedings came to an end, for the strip of paper with the sketch upon it was in her hand.

Sylvia of all girls! Some of the club looked simply relieved; some laughed; some look-

Sylvia—downright, outspoken Sylvia, with her hatred of shams.

Inwardly she echoed Sarah Endicott's assertion: 'It's as bad—or as good—as blackballing her to have Sylvia for an emissary. This club will never be bothered with her.'

Sylvia procrastinated, a very unusual thing for her. It was within a day of the next weekly meeting of the club when she set out in the late afternoon for the pretentious, old-fashioned house, with uncared-for, once elaborate grounds, where Blandid Foyle lived with her aunt.

Blandid had gone out on an errand to the village, and Sylvia overtook and walked along with her.

'I'm—I'm a messenger from the Upper Ten Club,' Sylvia said, plunging in desperately. They—

'I hope they understand that I never form intimacies,' interrupted the other girl quickly. 'I've just had a letter from an old friend who admired mamma so much. My sister is a great beauty, too. I think she is the most beautiful creature I ever saw except her own child.'

Sylvia had been shown several times a photograph of the sister, a commonplace little woman, slightly less plain than Blandid, with a coarse-featured, large-eyed little girl. 'I only care for congenial people; I hope the girls understand that. I went to see some people who used to live next door to us. The woman was an invalid, and I wanted to help her. But it was hard for me. I think they only cared for me because of my social position. Whether the pitcher goes to the stone or the stone to the pitcher it is always the pitcher that suffers. But my mission children are dear! I do so love children!'

'Does she? or is it only a pose like the